**The Effects of Smoking**

**Introduction**

Smoking has a detrimental effect to the individual’s health and their family through second-hand smoke. A given fact stated by Health Canada is that “The average smoker will die about 8 years earlier than a similar non-smoker. Life expectancy improves after a smoker quits” (Health Canada, 2009). Its causes are widely known yet individuals still attract to the consumption of cigarettes.

**Cigarette’s Brief History**

Cigarette’s origin place is America, where the production of tobacco itself began. People started to consume the leaves for smoking and chewing. “The first users were considered to be of Maya civilization in Central America. The people of Aztecs in South America followed and crushed tobacco leaves, wrapped them in corn husks to smoke” (iloveindia.com). The corn husks were replaced in the early 17th century by paper in Spain, which spread the smoking custom.

The word ‘cigarette’ is French from ‘sigarito’ in Spanish (iloveindia.com).

After the Crimean War, cigarettes were introduced to the English world (iloveindia.com). British soldiers started to smoke during the war and when they returned to England, the custom was quickly spread. [Phillip Morris](http://www.philipmorrisinternational.com/pmintl/pages/eng/default.asp), a London tobacconist, in 1854 started to manufacture cigarettes. In U.S, manufacturing of cigarettes didn’t start until 1864. In 1879, due to the high demand of cigarettes, the invention of the first cigarette machine was introduced (iloveindia.com).

“In 1922, the Tobacco Tax Law fixed the weight of the tobacco at 1361 mg per cigarette, thereby also determining the modern day size. By 1930s and 40s, the other brands which became popular were Old Gold, Raleigh and Philip Morris” (iloveindia.com). In 1954, studies showed that tobacco consumption was harmful to the health. “In 1954, R. J Reynolds manufactured the first filtered cigarette under the brand name Winston. In 1956, the first filtered cigarette with menthol, named Salem was introduced. In 1962, Kent brand was launched, which had ‘micronit filter’, containing asbestos” (iloveindia.com). In 1968, companies failed by attempting the sale of cigarettes, under the name of Brave, that contained lettuce leaves and not tobacco.

Manufacturing companies extended their market of cigarettes in other countries, specifically in the developing countries of Asia (iloveindia.com). The brand, Malbora, was ranked as the top brand in the world.

During the 1980s, smoking was seen as impolite and “politically ‘incorrect’” (iloveindia.com). That idea quickly changed in the 21st century as society accepted the habit of smoking. Tobacco smoking became addictive and “the world’s most devastating causes of death and disease” (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2009). In the late 1990s, World Health Organization estimated a worldwide death of approximately 4 million per year and this estimation increased by a million approximately in 2003 (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2009).

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**Have you checked the components of *your* cigarette?**

Cigarettes contain many toxins, one too many to count, which are hazardous to the person’s health and the numbers increase when the smoke is released. Some of the dangerous toxins added to a cigarette are nicotine, ammonia, tar, benzene, cadmium, carbon monoxide, and Formaldehyde. The depressing fact is those are not the only [chemicals added](http://menshealth.about.com/cs/hearthealth/a/cig_contents.htm).

[Nicotine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicotine) helps you become addicted to tobacco, which is why many find it hard to stop their habits right away. This chemical gets absorbed into the individual’s bloodstream and within ten seconds, gives ‘a rush to the brain’. It “produces chemicals in the brain called dopamine” (About.com, 2005). It also increases the individual’s heart rate and blood pressure (About.com, 2005) and affects your cardiovascular and endocrine systems (Body and Health, 2009). [Ammonia](http://quitsmoking.about.com/cs/nicotineinhaler/g/ammonia.htm) simple helps the nicotine do its job in other words. [Tar](http://quitsmoking.about.com/od/chemicalsinsmoke/g/tar.htm) is a “black residue containing hundreds of chemical [and] are considered carcinogenic or classified as hazardous waste. They include polyaromatic hydrocarbons (PAH), aromatic amines and inorganic compounds” (About.com, 2005). [Benzene](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benzene#Health_effects) is a chemical used in fuel and dyes. It is known to cause cancer (About.com, 2005). [Cadmium](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cadmium_poisoning#Sources_of_exposure) can cause kidney damage and also “increases the risk of developing lung cancer (About.com, 2005). [Carbon monoxide](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carbon_monoxide#Source_concentrations) “reduces the ability of your red blood cells to deliver oxygen to tissues, causing the greatest potential damage to the heart, brain and skeletal muscles -- tissues that have the most demand for oxygen” (Body and Health, 2009). [Formaldehyde](http://quitsmoking.about.com/od/chemicalsinsmoke/p/Formaldehyde1.htm) is “classified by the United States Environmental Protection Agency as a probable human carcinogen” (Body and Health, 2009). Some of the symptoms are eye, nose and throat irritations, and other breathing problems (Body and Health, 2009).

**Health Effects**

Smoking doesn’t give individual positive results; rather it produces more negative effects for the body. According to Canadian Cancer Society, 30% of all cancer deaths are because of smoking (Canadian Cancer Society, 2009). Smoking has adverse health effects: [lung cancer](http://bodyandhealth.canada.com/channel_section_details.asp?text_id=3254&channel_id=2022&relation_id=16630), lung disease and [heart disease](http://bodyandhealth.canada.com/channel_section_details.asp?text_id=3255&channel_id=2022&relation_id=16630). It “also increase[s] the risk of developing cancer of the bladder, cervix, colon and rectum, esophagus, kidney, larynx, mouth and throat, pancreas, stomach and some types of ovarian tumours” (Canadian Cancer Society, 2009).

The more an individual smokes, the greater the risk is for them to have lung cancer. “Smoking causes genetic changes in the cells of the lung that lead to the development of lung cancer” (Health Canada, 2009). It can also cause lung disease. COPD ([Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease](http://www.lung.ca/diseases-maladies/copd-mpoc/what-quoi/index_e.php)) is a respiratory disease that is associated with smoking; this includes emphysema, chronic bronchitis, and asthmatic bronchitis (Health Canada, 2009). Cardiovascular diseases (a form of heart disease) “are diseases and injuries of the heart, the blood vessels of the heart, and of the system of blood vessels (veins and arteries) throughout the body and brain” (Health Canada, 2009). It also includes heart attacks and strokes.

For women, it can destroy their reproductive system and hurt babies. It can also reduce fertility and there is a higher chance of miscarriages, premature births, stillbirth, infant death and low birth-weight infants (American Cancer Society, 2007).

**Second-Hand Smoke**

There are two categories of smoke in cigarette smoke: Mainstream smoke (MS) and Sidestream smoke. “Mainstream smoke is a combination of inhaled and exhaled smoke after taking a puff on a lit cigarette (Martin, 2009). It depends on each person as it is affected by how the smoker inhales and exhales. Sidestream smoke, on the other hand, is the smoke that comes off the end of cigarette butt (Martin, 2009). These two categories form [second-hand smoke](http://quitsmoking.about.com/cs/secondhandsmoke/a/secondhandsmoke.htm), also known as passive smoking.

Second-hand smoke consists of “a combination of poisonous gases, liquids, and breathable particles that are harmful to [the] health” (Health Canada, 2007). Non-smokers residing with smokers have a 24% increased risk for developing lung cancer in comparison to other non-smokers (MedicineNet, 2009).

Children are more affected than adults because they breathe faster and can increase their chances of developing asthma by 200 – 400 percent (Health Canada, 2009). They are also at risk for ear infections. Children being exposed to second-hand smoke are at risk for: bronchitis, pneumonia, asthma, middle ear disease, and tonsillitis (Alberta Health Services, 2009).

There are more than 4000 chemicals which are known to cause cancer; these include: carbon monoxide, ammonia, cadmium, and arsenic. It can cause sore eyes and throat, nasal irritation, headaches, coughing and wheezing, nausea and dizziness Canadian Cancer Society, 2009).

**Another Idea: Third-Hand Smoke?**

Smoke that lingers after a smoker has long finished their cigarette is known as [third-hand smoke](http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/story/CTVNews/20090106/cigarette_smoke_090106/20090106?hub=Health). “Researchers have found that third-hand smoke containing heavy metals, carcinogens and even radioactive materials lingers long after second-hand smoke has dissipated, and can be ingested by children crawling around a room” (TheStar, 2009).

**Conclusion**

Smoking tobacco is a harmful fact not only to those that smoke but also to the individuals who inhale the smoke, such as family members, friends and co workers. Not only does it harm the smoker themselves but for pregnant women, it can harm premature babies. A smoker usually doubles their risk of dying before they are at the age of 65 years old. Canada and other countries have begun to help smokers from quitting with programs that aid them towards the goal of quitting, removing tobacco related items off the shelf, banning advertising, and creating smoke free environment. Smoking is an essential key that contributes to health instability and creates an unhealthy environment for all of us.

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